



THE  
**BEGONIAN**

January/February 2014



Red tuberous begonia  
Photo by Kingsley Langenberg

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# The Begonian

Publication of the American Begonia Society

**American Begonia Society**

Founded January 1932

by Herbert P. Dyckman

## Aims and Purposes

To stimulate and promote  
interest in begonias  
and other shade-loving plants.

To encourage the introduction and  
development of new types of these plants.

To standardize the  
nomenclature of begonias.

To gather and publish information in regard  
to kinds, propagation, and culture of begonias  
and companion plants.

To issue a bulletin that will be mailed to  
all members of the society.

To bring into friendly contact all  
who love and grow begonias.

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Bonsai B. 'Robinson's Peach' pg.12



B. sizemoreae x rex hybrid pg.16



Calling Indoor Growers! pg.33

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**Front cover:** An Ecuadorean species  
in the section *Gobenia*. See page 5.  
Photo by Jacky Duruisseau

**Back cover:** Tuberous reiger begonia  
Photo by Tony Pinto

## President's Message

I hope everyone had a great holiday season and will enjoy prosperous begonia growing in the new year. I am looking forward to the convention, Begonias by the Bay, in Tampa and hope to see many of you there. Please download the convention materials from our website [www.begonias.org](http://www.begonias.org). Branches should also have a few printed copies available at meetings for the non-computer people. Mark March 19–March 23, 2014 on your calendar. For those with no email and no branch, please contact Jeannette Hall, 36747 Eden Street, Zephyrhills, FL 33541 (813-838-0374 for questions).

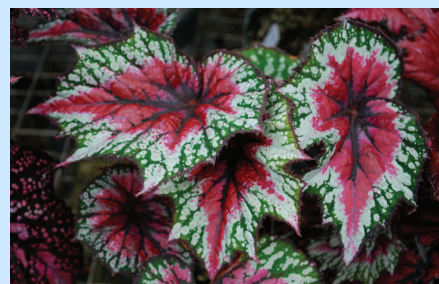
For those who can never get enough begonias, keep May 22-24, 2014 open for the Southwest Region Get-Together in Shreveport, LA!

Contact [fredaholley@bellsouth.net](mailto:fredaholley@bellsouth.net) for more information.

I'm still working on the annual meeting to be held in August, 2014. I'll keep you informed on the details.

Stay warm and keep those begonias going through the winter!

Virginia Jens, President



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## A Second Trip to Ecuador

Article & photos by Jacky Duruisseau, Bois, France

We went to Ecuador in 2012 and found many begonias. Almost 50 species are listed for this area and we saw 25 of them. I wrote about them in *The Begonian*. We still have many to find...

Some are especially interesting, such as species of the *Gobenia* section. Unfortunately, in March/April of 2012, they were not in blossom and I didn't find any seed of these very amazing begonias (**Fig. 1; Fig. 2 - see front cover photo**) of this species that I took at an altitude of about 2000 m (6500 ft.) in Podocarpus Park.

Another very nice one is *B. froebelii*, of the *Eupetalum* section (**Fig. 3**). It is a tuberous species and we saw it at up to 2500 m on the slopes and in the sun. It often grows with another tuberous species, *B. octopetala*, of the same section (**Fig. 4**). These two species were in blossom but it was too early to collect seeds.

So, we must go back to Ecuador!

We plan this trip for May/June 2014, two months after the 2012 one and we hope to bring back seeds this time.

I would be very glad if you could help me. In return, seeds will be given to the donors and to the ABS Seed Fund as I did after the Ecuador and Madagascar trips.

Of course, I'll write an article in *The Begonian*, as usual.

Thank you for your help.

Jacky Duruisseau  
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# ABS Convention

## March 19 – 23 2014, Tampa, FL

### Tour Details

#### Tour #1 – Wednesday, March 19 – Tarpon Springs

Our first stop will be a short stroll through the beautiful Florida Botanical Garden in Largo, 150 acres of nature and some of the most beautifully landscaped gardens around. With only their infrastructure supported by municipal taxes, the gardens are completely maintained by volunteers. You will see a wonderful mix of native Florida plants and non-native ornamentals that are well-adapted to our local climate. There are some begonias planted throughout, as well as the start of a begonia garden the Tampa Branch has done. Then it's off to Tarpon Springs, the heart of the Florida Greek community. Our guide will take us to the Heritage Center for a short film on the history and culture of the area, then on to the historic Sponge Docks for a 3 – 4 block walking/tasting tour of pastry, coffee and chocolate. You will then be given some free time at the Docks for lunch (on your own) shopping, museums, galleries, sponge boat tour – whatever... there is lots to do!

After dinner a presentation by D & D Growers, popular local herb specialists, is scheduled. Dennis is well known for his wide variety of herbs, his recipes, and the delicious samples he brings.

#### Tour #2 – Thursday, March 20 – Tropiflora Nursery, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens & More

We head south of Tampa to our first stop, Tropiflora Nursery in Sarasota. They have more bromeliads, tillandsia, and driftwood in one place than you've ever seen before.

In approximately six acres of indoor space in various greenhouses, as well as additional outdoor growing areas, they have bromeliads, almost four hundred varieties of Tillandsia, exotic succulents including terrestrial bromeliads, *Rhipsalis*, *Hoya*, *Dischidia* and Ant Plants, as well as many exotic aroids, orchids, ferns and fern allies and dozens of other rare plant oddities and exotic species. Then it's off to famous Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, the well-known center for research and education, as well as the famous showplace of thousands of colorful and exotic plants. Both an open air and under-glass museum, Selby Gardens is perhaps best known for its living collection of more than 6,000 orchids. It is also an established authority on other epiphytes including bromeliads, gesneriads and other plants.

For lunch we will be stopping at Troyers, famous for their Barn-Raising Country Buffet offering delicious traditional Amish-style country classics. You can choose the fixed price buffet for \$9.95 or you may order a-la-carte off the menu. Shoppers in the group will love their gift shop! And if that isn't enough, our last stop before heading home will be at the Women's Exchange, a non-profit consignment shop supporting the Arts of Sarasota. Consistently recognized as the best consignment shop in Sarasota, treasure hunters often find wonderful bargains on antiques, collectables, jewelry and decorator items. Since 1962 the Women's Exchange has donated over \$6 million in support of Sarasota Arts.

After dinner we'll be showing the out-



standing presentation from PBS's award winning Nature Series, "How Plants Communicate."

Our convention hotel is the Marriott/Westshore. Make your reservations by phone at 800-228-9290 in order to get the American Begonia Society rate of \$110 (for up to 3 in a room,) which includes breakfast. There is also a full-service restaurant and bar on site, as well as a beautiful pool, exercise room, gift shop, Starbucks Bar and free Wi-Fi. There is a free shuttle to and from the airport, as well as free parking at the hotel.

#### New this year . . .

**Can't be with us this year?** You can still order boutique items! Order shirts and other 'begonia' items for yourself or for your entire branch. Some with the ABS logo, some with our convention logo. Look in the registration packet for items and details.

**No snail mail!** Convention packets have been distributed electronically to a contact in each Branch. Members-At-Large can download the information from the ABS webpage. Anyone can request material from [begoniaconvention2014@aol.com](mailto:begoniaconvention2014@aol.com)

**We all look forward to seeing you in Tampa in March!**



# Conservation and Research Grants Awards and Contributions

## Dear American Begonia Society Branches and Members,

The Conservation and Research Fund has been pleased to award two grants for the 2014 grant cycle. One grant was awarded to Dr. Mark Tebbitt for a research expedition to Ecuador in January 2014 and for another trip to Columbia in June 2014. The second grant was awarded to Jacky Duruisseau for a research and collecting trip to Ecuador in April-May, 2014.

Through the Conservation and Research Fund, the ABS has supported these and many other worthy activities and studies over the years. Unfortunately, this important fund runs the risk of eventually being depleted, so these latest grant requests have not been fully funded. In an effort to maintain the ongoing viability of the Conservation and Research Fund, ABS members and branches are respectfully asked to support these trips by making a contribution.

Contributions should be sent to the ABS Treasurer, Carol Notaras (see address back inside cover), please note on the memo line for whose trip the check has been sent. Donors may also choose to have their contributions directed toward the unrestricted support of any future Conservation and Research Grants Awards. Donations sent through Carol Notaras, ABS Treasurer, will be tax deductible.

Your consideration and generous support is appreciated.

Martin E. Delgado, Chairman

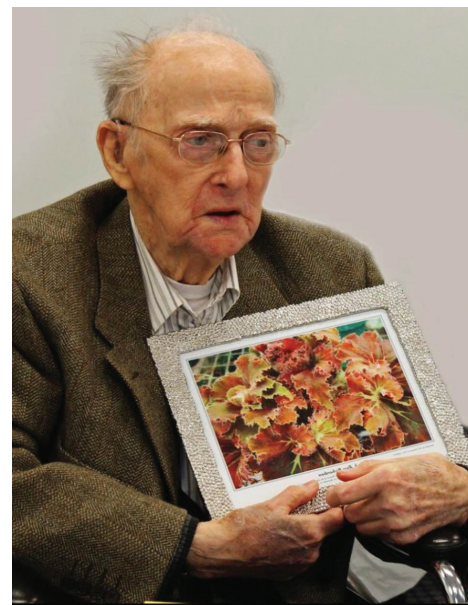
## “Begonias the Western Way”



**11<sup>th</sup> Begonia Convention hosted by the Begonia Society of Western Australia**

**Held @ the Sebel Hotel in Mandurah, Western Australia  
28<sup>th</sup> March – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014**

**Registration forms available: <http://www.begoniaswa.org>  
or email for more details [begoniaswa@live.com.au](mailto:begoniaswa@live.com.au)**



Russ Richardson (left) founder of the Greater Atlanta Branch. Russ (above), receiving the picture of the begonia named for him, with Betty Lockett, first President of the society (left) and Johnnie Hadley, present President (right). Mary Elizabeth Moultrie is presenting the picture.

## *Celebration by the Greater Atlanta Branch*

*By Mary Elizabeth Moultrie*

The November 9, 2013 meeting of The Greater Atlanta Branch of The America Begonia Society was an exciting occasion for all members. Not only were we celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of our beloved founder Russ Richardson, but we were also being introduced to the beautiful *Begonia* ‘Russ Richardson’ that was hybridized for the Greater Atlanta Branch by Brad Thompson in Vista, California. As one who has attended many ABS Conventions and listened to numerous seminars on the science of hybridizing, I understand the process is not just a simple one, two, and three. I have to say that even though at this time I’m not aware of the parentage of *Begonia* ‘Russ Richardson’ the offspring is simply gorgeous (thank you Brad for making our celebration and Russ’ birthday so exciting).

Not only did we get to have a delicious luncheon with birthday cake and ice cream, but a special guest was Charles Jaros who brought

plants for us to buy and shared a slide show of his trip to Thailand. One of our members, Ozzie Johnson, was just back from a collecting trip to Viet Nam and had some seedling hybrids of the species *Begonia edulis*, to show us. Another member, Rekha Morris told us about her upcoming trip to India and Australia. One of the plants that I was able to buy was one that Rekha brought back from one of her expeditions to India.

More than thirty of our members came to tell Russ what a great thing he and Betty Lockett and Mary Elizabeth Shannon did when they got together in the mid-eighties and formed a society to learn more about the begonia and all of its forms and colors. Thus was born the Greater Atlanta Branch, and thus all of us in the greater Atlanta area have gotten to know and love Russ. The very beginnings have grown far beyond that Atlanta area to California, Florida, India, Viet Nam, Thailand and more.

## *SWR/ABS Get-Together/ABS Board Meeting*

### *May 22–24, 2014*

Southwest Region meetings are dubbed Get-Togethers because early meetings were just that. The first was actually held in a garage and was an occasion for plant swaps and talk about begonias among members in the region. This was before there were a lot of the current branches and those first attendees were anxious to meet others with a common love for begonias.

This 2014 meeting will honor this tradition with plants for the plant sale coming from member contributions rather than large commercial buys. Seminars will be talks about growing by our enthusiastic members. A committee of members from throughout the region is planning the event and our volunteers are conducting all events.

Come and enjoy an old-fashioned, friendly Get-Together! Packets will be mailed to all Southwest Region Members, ABS Board Members, and speakers in late winter. If others want a packet please call or email Freda Holley at 318-251-2296 or gehrtii@icloud.com. The hotel is the Holiday Inn Airport West, rooms are \$79 plus taxes, and the hotel has an airport shuttle; their number is 318-688-3000.

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## 2014 ABS Awards

It is time to send your nominations for ABS awards for 2014. You may send them by post or e-mail but only one nomination per page. **Nomination must be received by January 31, 2014.**

### Award Criteria

The **Eva Kenworthy Gray Award** is given for contributing original material toward helping the rank and file members further their study of begonias.

The **Alfred D. Robinson Medal of Honor** is for a begonia cultivar that has been released for at least five years and no more than fifteen. This hybrid must be registered with the Nomenclature Department and widely distributed, and the originator of the begonia must be a member of the American Begonia Society.

The **Rudolph Ziesenhenn Award** is presented to an Editor who collects and edits the works of others for a publication either U.S. or International and a) who encourages a broad array of writers both scientific and practical to write and contribute articles, and, b) who issues a publication on begonias that is both excellent in design and content and which contributes to our knowledge and appreciation of begonias.

The **Marge Lee Award** is given to a person who contributes something of a spiritual value toward cementing goodwill and harmony among members.

The **Gene Salisbury Award** is given to a grower who exemplifies the very best in cultural practice, but also brings to us by their careful work the new species and hybrids. These are growers who contribute to our society simply through their excellence in growing begonias.

Send your nominations to: Cheryl Lenert, 21744 F.M. 2920 Road, Hockley, TX 77447, lenert@flash.net

## Venation: Palmate, Pinnate, or Palmate-pinnate?



Watch for the answer in your next *The Begonian*  
brought to you by *A Word With You!*

(Photo by Tony Pinto)



**ARE YOU LOOKING  
FOR YOUR CONVENTION  
PACKET IN THE MAIL?**

**Not this year! Packets were  
emailed to Branch contacts  
for distribution. If you don't have it  
yet, you can download the information from  
the ABS website, or you may request it at:  
[Begoniaconvention2014@aol.com](mailto:Begoniaconvention2014@aol.com)**

## Novel Grown Begonias

By Mike Flaherty,  
Santa Barbara, CA  
Pictures by  
Gary Hunt



A tall double ball topiary (pictured above). I grew this plant from seed collected from *echinosepala*. I think *luxurians* may be one of the parents. A selection of novel grown begonias (opposite page, top). From left to right: 'Nakomis' with braided trunk; 'Barely There'; 'Carmen'; 'Hazel's Front Porch' Cane (opposite page, bottom) Cutting out all but one cane to create a tree out of 'Hazel's Front Porch'.

I have grown begonias since 1961 and I was always keen on them. Begonias became my favorite plant when I met Brad Thompson about 15 years ago. Brad's begonia garden was one of the tours at the LA convention and his plants were spectacular. He grew everything; rex, species, tuberous, canes, shrubs, rhizomatous and he grew standards (tree form). Brad's begonias were my inspiration.

After seeing Brad's begonia cane trees I thought why not grow a shrub, tuberous and rhizomatous tree form? I just wait for the plant to tell me it wants to be a tree. When *B. 'Bonfire'* came up with one major growth I knew this was my chance to grow a 'Bonfire' tree. When 'Bonfire' grew with two major growths from one tuber this was my opportunity to grow into the shape of a wreath. Rhizomatous are the most difficult to grow into a



tree. The erect rhizomatous lend themselves to this form; however, I have grown creeping rhizomatous *bowerae* as a standard.

When growing a standard I let the plant grow to the desired height, then pinch to encourage branching. As the plant branches I continue to pinch the new side growths and remove any new canes. Begonias with big strong canes work best. Some of my favorites are 'Barely There', 'Nakomis' and

continued on next page

## Novel Grown Begonias

continued from page 11

'Hazel's Front Porch'. These are all fast growing and branch easily. I also grow braided begonia trees. I start with three canes and braid the canes as they grow. You can get a much fuller plant with this method.

I have been amazed that we don't see standards at ABS shows. When I bring my bonsais or standards to shows they always receive a lot of attention. I think my plants will inspire others to grow these novel begonias, however, the next time there is an ABS show I still don't see anyone else showing standards!

Novel grown is a category for begonias entered in ABS shows. In my opinion, putting a plant in a decorative container is not novel "grown". Plants grown in a unique or novel way should be the only plants in this category. Plants put into a decorative container should be in a separate category.

I look forward to seeing ABS members grow some begonias in tree form.



Bonsai B. 'Robinson's Peach'

The cold days of winter have arrived, and most of us (not me) have our begonias snug as a bug in a rug inside. Whether it be a greenhouse, sunroom, bright window, or under crowded lights, this is a time of rest. Growth slows down, if not completely stops. Your care must change, too.

Drier air may mean some extra watering, but cut that fertilizer down in half or more, until the longer days of late February come. Even under lights, caution should be used when fertilizing. Perhaps begonias grown under lights, in a terrarium, may require some additional fertilizer, but most of our plants do not. Canes should have been pruned well, to leave room for next year's growth. Remove damaged leaves, as this is only fodder for diseases and pests. Come March, care and culture should begin anew as plants wake up.

Here in Florida, I grow my begonias outdoors all year. They are in the landscape, under the shade cloth, and in my one 10x20 covered greenhouse - actually a shadehouse that is covered from late November until early March. A heater is on standby for those infrequent cold snaps. I use this time to take cuttings of my favorite varieties, and give some specimens a better environment. Seedlings grow well with the added warmth and humidity. This year is going to feature a heat mat to help cuttings grow even faster.

In the shadehouses, the primary concern are the windy cold fronts and cold snaps. Frostcloth stands by as my protection. For those unfamiliar with frostcloth, it is a light weave that placed over plants, protect them to 28°F, with heavier weights protecting to 24°F. I simply place the plants in rows, cover, and clip down tightly. The warmth of the ground radiates upwards and helps keep the temperature elevated those few precious degrees. It works!

## In the Mailbox

Areas of the landscape are protected enough that frostcloth is not required. It is amazing what good tree cover can do. When frost settles, you can see the ring outside of the tree cover with frost, yet underneath it is just green. If it does get cold enough to freeze hard - and it has happened - a light watering keeps moisture levels up. Afterwards, damaged is cleaned up, and the plant recovers by spring. Our ground does not freeze here. Living near the Gulf of Mexico helps keep it a few degrees as warmer winds can prevent temperatures from falling as much as inland areas. Again, sprays of water from the hose helps recovery. It has been 5 years since cold has penetrated Florida enough to damage the yard. Fingers crossed this year!

These ideas are some solutions to protect plants and care for them during the villain of begonias - winter! Once the warm March sun starts to heat the land, another growing season is in full swing. If you ever have any questions on culture, care or just need help, feel free to contact me at [gsytch@cs.com](mailto:gsytch@cs.com).

Good Growing, Greg Sytch,  
*Horticultural Correspondent*

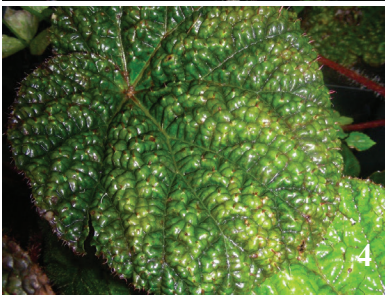


My hybrid B. 'Alligator Alley' - a large rhizomatous type.



## *B. sizemoreae* and Its Hybrids

by Bernard Yorke, Brisbane, Australia



It is just over twelve months ago since I submitted an article (*The Begonian*, Sept/Oct 2012, p. 192) on the results of hybridizing with *B. sizemoreae*. As I had predicted in my last article, this one has a strong influence over its progeny and whilst some seedlings appear different at six months, by the time twelve months comes along, all totally resemble *sizemoreae*, even those where it has been only the pollen parent. However, I have kept these seedlings separate as they would have their chromosomes diluted. One of these seedlings I have used as a pollen parent, as while it resembles a pale *sizemoreae*, it was a hybrid of *goegoensis* x *sizemoreae*.

I used this seedling extensively in hybridizing with U400, *geherti*, 'Little Brother Montgomery' and *xanthina*, and have posted a few photos to show the results. These seedlings are now twelve months old so I do not expect any great change. Another achievement is the introduction of an old variety of *rex* and after two generations of hybridizing with *sizemoreae* and its progeny, most of the color remains, but the plant is sturdy, doesn't need spraying and is not dormant during our moderate winters.

I am still experimenting with this one and will post another article next year. Why am I concentrating on *sizemoreae* and its hybrids? My aim is to produce good sized leaves with good color ...and of course, on a hardy plant that anyone can grow.

1. *B. 'Silver Legend'*
2. *B. U400* x *sizemoreae* hybrid
3. *B. 'Little Brother Montgomery'* x *sizemoreae* hybrid
4. *B. gehertii* x *sizemoreae* hybrid
5. *B. rex* hybrid with *sizemoreae* hybrid
6. Another hybrid of *B. U400* x *sizemoreae*

## A Word with You: Scandent and Lianescent

By Claudia Goodridge, New Haven, CT

Stems again. These stems are meant to climb - *scandent* and *lianescent*. Scrambling across the ground in the wild and finding a tree or shrub, up they go. Finding a cliff, they'll cascade or trail. (Our hanging baskets make use of that habit.) Begonia literature suggests about 30 species and 25 or more additional cultivars of this type - *scandent* and *lianescent*.

Mr. Webster confirms that *scandent* means climbing. *Lianescent* didn't make it into my Webster, but *liana*, a luxuriantly growing, tropical vine, did. Jack Golding says *scandent* begonias are "climbing, growing upward on available supports," while *lianescent* begonias are "climbing supported by adventitious roots," a crisp, clean distinction. I didn't find either technical term in Tebbitt's glossary; he uses "climbing" in his text instead - the botanical equivalent of plain English legal documents. Among the climbers he references *B. convolvulacea* as using adventitious roots, *lianescent* then, as is *B. integerrima*.

The Thompsons' *Begonias* section on trailing-scandent begonias says they either trail or climb, and adds *B. ampla*, *fagifolia*, *glabra*, *mannii*, *polygonoides*, and *procumbens* to the list. Their glossary says *lianes* are "plants of vine like habit."

I may be jumping to conclusions, but the literature suggests a two pronged survival strategy here. Climbing allows more plant energy to go into flowers, e.g. reproduction. No need to use up resources building



*B. polygonoides* - a scandent grower

a solid stem to get to the sunlight and photosynthesis; just use someone else's. Given a less inviting or more competitive spot on the ground, germinate, put down roots, and grow out of it. *Scandent/lianescent* begonias fit that description. They climb; and they're longer blooming than usual. Some are even everblooming. Maybe this explains my clematis too - with shaded, cool roots they then scramble at an exhilarating rate up the fence to bloom in full, baking sun.

I love proverbs and sayings. "If you're given lemons, turn them into lemonade" works here, as does "dealing with a bad hand." Or could it be OPM? <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> OPM - Other People's Money



## Madagascar: Our Second Trip

### Part 3

January 20th / February 19th, 2013

Article & photos by Jacky Duruisseau, Bois France

**Thursday, February 7th:** The regular boat from Maroantsetra to Ambanizana, on the western coast of the Masoala peninsula, is supposed to leave at 5:30am. When we arrive at the port at 5:00am, it is still dark and the dock is full, which makes me wonder whether we'll make it aboard. It is a boat, not a ferry... with two outboard motors! Our bags are finally unloaded and maybe we will board? Eventually, a space is freed on a bench outside, just in front of the cabin. When I go onto the boat, I can feel the boat rock as a sign of excess load. I think there are about 40 people with many bags - heavy ones! We leave. But after five minutes of navigation, the boat turns back! The captain announces: "We have an excess load and ten people must get off!" Discussions, of course. But we are in Madagascar and things always turn out all right! We start

again at 6am and the day is dawning ...and the tide falls. When we attempt to cross a sandbar, the boat grounds and it is dangerously listing. No problem! Twenty or so people jump into the water, hold the boat upright and pull it to deeper water... Our guide, Clément, comments: "Sometimes, there are wrecks... sometimes people die!" The journey is completed without further problems and we reach Ambanizana after 4 hours of sailing and some stops to disembark passengers, and for embarking some other ones. At Ambanizana, there is no dock (**Fig. 1**)! Of course, that poses a problem for leaving the boat and unloading the foods. The captain takes Colette in his arms(!!!) and almost falls with her into the water and the mud.

Fig. 1. The regular boat from Maroantsetra to Ambanizana

We put up hammocks in a hut whose owner Clément knows and then we go to the village to greet the chief. On our return, we see cane sugar juice extraction using a rudimentary but efficient machine (**Fig. 2**): two men roll a big trunk equipped with arms, which crushes the cane pieces; juice runs down along another piece of wood and will be used for making *betsa-betsa*, the local rum.

Clément goes in search of a canoe and fishermen to carry us far away towards the north, for a few days. In the evening, Denise prepares us an excellent meal of papaya relishes and spaghetti. (*Misaotra be Denise, sakafo soa!* Thanks so much Denise for this good meal! )

We finish this day with a wonderful sight: a huge thunderstorm on the opposite shore of Antongil Bay from Ambanizana, where we were two days ago.

**Friday 8:** First exploration day on the Masoala Peninsula. We go upstream on the Androka river to an altitude of 300 m. We don't enter the national park but stay at the edge. We are near villages and I had guessed we'd find burned and cultivated areas, which is actually the case. We know that Malgache people can cultivate up to 1500 m from the sea. Many areas are now in the sun after deforestation, the humidity is low and we don't find any begonias. If they once grew here, they have disappeared now! We must walk a lot to find forest again. We discover a nice spot with *B. lyallii* var. *lyallii* which we had already found in the Makira forest. We see a wonderful Capricorn beetle and it is very difficult to photograph it (**Fig. 3**). We are caught in a shower when we come back. Be careful, it is slippery! The sun comes back when we arrive at the camp. Bathing in

the river is always a good time and we wait for it. In the evening, Denise serves green mango relishes just before the sardines in oil.

We get another spectacular thunderstorm, like yesterday. But it is not yet the rainy season here!

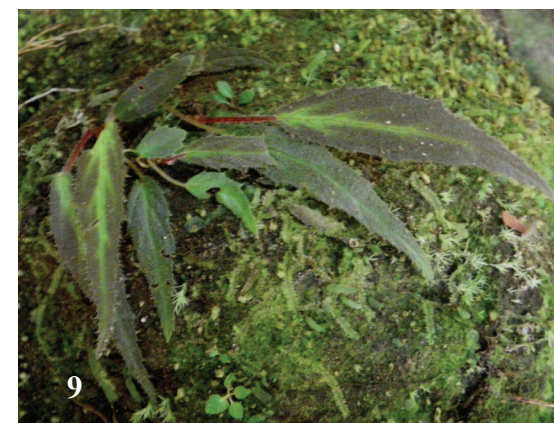
**Saturday 9:** We explore a second river today, the Andranomadio River, but at a lower elevation, about 100 m. We move far from Ambanizana and the cultivated areas seem rare, but there is a path and a path always leads somewhere. We discover a small begonia, a wonder (**Fig. 4**)! It grows on rocks near the river. This miniature begonia, certainly not yet described, is a tuberous one with elongated and toothed leaves, with spiniform hairs: many are in blossom, with pink flowers, but no mature fruits. What a shame! We again find a form of *B. lyallii* near a very large cultivated area! It is the place where the path was headed, of course! OK, we'll come back.

Denise is waiting for us with banana donuts and burning hot tea... Big siesta and a big shower makes noise on the roof! Tomorrow is another day...

**Sunday 10:** The Ankaramarivo River is the third one in the south of Ambanizana. No begonias here. No areas are cultivated or burned yet! Why are there no begonias?

So we try to find again the nice species we found in December of 2009. Henri Laporte

Photos pages 20–21 Fig. 2. Cane sugar juice extraction. Fig. 3. A very nice Capricorn beetle. Fig. 4. A jewel! Fig. 5. *Begonia* sp. 06 HL, Madagascar. Fig. 6. A tuberous epiphytic begonia. Fig. 7. The dugout canoe to Ambilosy. Fig. 8. A tuberous saxicole [rock dwelling] one. Fig. 9. Another miniature one. Fig. 10. *Begonia masoalensis* M. Hughes Fig. 11. *Begonia masoalensis* M. Hughes Fig. 12. A tuberous one in blossom with seeds.





Madagascar continued

had discovered it in 1998 and grew this one (*Begonia* sp. 06 HL). Clément says that it is at about 4 km from here, on the trail that goes from Ambanizana to Ambodifohara. Our camp was in this village in 2009 and it was our starting point for our explorations. We find the plant again, in the same place, on rocks at 20 m from the sea and at an altitude of 25 m (Fig. 5). There are about 15 plants with flowers and seeds! This small creeping and saxicole begonia seems very endangered here because it grows on a path where many people walk. I search around the area and do not find any others. Henri had searched too, also in vain.

We come back towards the camp and explore a last river. *B. lyallii* grows here in huge numbers along with a tuberous species we found in the Makira forest which here grows as an epiphyte on trunks and rocks (Fig. 6). I take a big fall into the river after the trunk on which I crossed breaks! Luckily, no injuries. In the meantime, Colette, who had remained behind, meets the boat captain and his family: they give a pineapple to her as a gift. The dessert is assured for the evening meal! Delicious!

Swimming and a nap, then we begin the camp cleanup because tomorrow we leave early, heading north. Denise



Fig. 13. A nice *Melastomataceae*.  
Fig. 14. Denise, Clément, Colette and me.  
Fig. 15. A nice species from Befandriana.

buys some fish and, like Malgache people, we eat rice with fish.

**Monday 11:** We get up early and break camp in order to take advantage of the calmer morning seas. Yesterday, Clément has found a canoe with two boatmen who belong to an Ambanizana fishing group. It is a very large dugout canoe (we are six people plus baggage) made from a tree trunk fitted with a outboard motor (Fig. 7). We leave at 7 am. The sea is quiet with small lapping waves but without heavy swells. We feel safer with these two fishermen than on the regular boat from Maroantsetra. We arrive at Ambilosy after two hours. No problems, cool navigation. Unfortunately, we cannot put up camp in this village but we find a flat place 1 km to the north, near the sea, in a plantation of vanilla and pineapples, under a mango tree. We don't have space enough for two hammocks: Just one will be good! We protect it against rain with a cover. Clément announces: "Here we are like Robinson Crusoe". Yes, we are alone, deep in the countryside and near the sea... but we like it like that!

Ambilosy is the name of two rivers (it is often like that in Madagascar) the small one (*Ambilosy kely*) and the large one (*Ambilosy be*). We start in the afternoon to explore the first river. No path and hopefully no cultivated areas. We come upon a place with a new begonia species (Fig. 8) on rocks, with pale green leaves, with flowers and seeds! Some of them seem a little faded and it shows the rain shortage in Masoala. With it, Colette found a very small species (Fig. 9). At first, I think it is a young plant of the previous species but it turns out to be another species. Further - what a surprise - we find *Begonia masoalensis* (Figs. 10&11). Mark Hughes of the Edinburgh Botanical Garden is now dis-

tributing this species from an herbarium specimen. This tuberous species is a little different from the one we saw in 2009 at Ambodifohara which had embossed leaves. Here, the leaves are smoother, pale green or bronze green. I take photos of the very strange and unusual inflorescences with spindle-shaped ovary to send to Mark who wants to add the final touches to his description. Unfortunately, no seeds on this begonia! We again find the tuberous species we saw yesterday with entire, green and smooth leaves and another rhizomatous one, that we found in 2009. A nice day with five interesting species.

We deserve a good swim in warm water (about 30°C, 85°F) and good noodle soup. In the evening (night falls about 7pm), some fireflies flicker around the hammock. In the middle of night, an animal (who knows what?) eats the mangos and some fall into the hammock.

**Tuesday 12:** The last exploration on the Ambilosybe River today. We find the same species as yesterday along the stream. On huge rocks, we see many tuberous ones. One is in blossom with many flowers, fruits and seeds (Fig. 12). The terrain is difficult along the river and I guess that walking here would be impossible in the full rainy season. We again find *Begonia masoalensis*, always on muddy slopes and it is strange: usually, tuberous species prefer a very drained soil, such as rocks. We see a nice *Melastomataceae* (Fig. 13)

Then we come to a very large burned area. Difficult because the slope is very steep and all trunks remain in the ground. Cutting down trees on a steep slope such as this one is bad because with strong rains, good soil is carried away! And afterwards, no plants can grow except ruderal ones. We reach the river after



Fig. 16. At the Talatamaty market

#### Madagascar continued

an acrobatic walk and we have a picnic. We find a small tuberous begonia further up, (maybe it's *Begonia nana*) and some of the tuberous species we often met during this expedition, with many fruits here, and with seeds. They will be our last begonias on this trip.

When we come back, a female chameleon (*Furcifer pardalis*) is laying her eggs in a hollow of the path and a Tenrec (a long sort of hedgehog) escapes into a thicket.

Swimming, and rest...we wait for Denise's spaghetti! Our last night in brush, with another big thunderstorm towards Maroantsetra and some rain in the night.

**Wednesday 13:** We leave Ambilosy about 7:00am. The sea is calm and our two fishermen carry us to Maroantsetra in 2 hours. No problem passing the sandbar, the two seamen are experienced ones and they bring us all the way to the Cocobeach Hotel terrace. We leave these two reliable and competent people and we hope to use their service for our next trip and make all the crossings with them.

Whoa! The electricity has come back to Maroantsetra! But we are still the only customers. On our last evening, Clement and Denise come by for a goodbye with

us; Clément shows us several begonia drawings that Henri Laporte gave to him, ten years ago and he treasures them. I note that there are many species discovered by Henri that we still have not found. We must come back...

Positive results again: about 20 begonia species, ten of them new with regard to our 2009 trip. It is to be regretted that the rainy season was insufficient. Some of the tuberous species still had not come up, as they had in 2009.

Bye-bye Clément and Denise. See you soon for new adventures! (Fig. 14).

**February 14-19:** We return to Antanan-rivo today where we land in thunder and rain. Here, it is the rainy season ...and it is cooler than in the north.

A rest at our inn, the Chez Jeanne, for a few days before our departure on Tuesday, 19th. I visit the "Plantes Rares" nursery where I find again the two plants I bought in 2009: *Begonia antsiranensis* and another unknown species that grows as a cultivated plant towards Befandriana, between Antsohihy and Mandritasra, in the north (photo 15).

We go several times to the Talatamaty market nearby (Fig. 16): rich in colors and odors. People smile at us and wave to us: "alut vazaha!"; Here there is no aggressive-ness nor hostility. Yet, what poverty!

*Veloma Madagasikara!*

**Acknowledgments:** I would like to thank the Begonia Societies and all the people who helped me financially for this trip: the American Begonia Society, the Mid American Begonia Society Branch, the Buxton Branch, the Queensland Begonia Society, Linda Tamblyn, Jem Wiseman, Wanda Macnair and Michiko Nakamura. I hope all the seeds I sent to them have germinated, giving you an idea of the very nice species that grow in Madagascar. Thank you again.

The seed fund is a service to members only. It is a privilege of your membership. Please

self-pollinate your species begonias, collect the seeds and send them to the seed fund. We depend on your contributions of seeds to make a wider variety of species available to the members. The Seed Fund now offers a PayPal option. This option is available through the ABS Website. Go to the Seed Fund Page and select the link "Current Seed Listing pay with PayPal". There is a small "PayPal" fee plus the "shipping and handling" fee to cover the cost of using PayPal. Choose the fee amount in the drop down menu at the bottom of the page as with the shipping and handling drop down menus. By policy, new seed additions are made after they are first published in *The Begonian*, and updated as supplies vary while filling orders. This is the best source for the current available seed list. By policy, new seed additions are made after they are first published in *The Begonian* and updated as supplies vary while filling orders. This is the best source for the current available seed list. Packets of seeds are \$2.00. Very rare seeds and newly collected seeds will be \$3.00 or more per packet when noted. California residents please add 8.75% sales tax. All orders must be accompanied by check or money order, payable in US funds ONLY to the Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund.

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**DISCLAIMER:** The seeds distributed by the seed fund are identified as received from the donors. The species names (in italics) reported here are correct based on the latest information from *BEGONIA-CEAE, Ed. 2*; Golding, and Wasshausen. Hybrid names are made consistent with the *ABS Check List of Begonia Hybrids* edited by Howard Berg dated 9/13/2005.

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# Kit Jeans Mounger: Hybridizing at the Corner of Economic Self-Determination & Simple Serendipity

Article by Lee Sinoff, Miami, FL

This 'Begonia's Legends' series isn't necessarily just about people who have made profound contributions as hybridizers to the family *Begoniaceae*, even though the first three profiles — including this one — do feature people whose names we know most likely for their numerous, varied, distinctive and intimately familiar new begonia introductions. Nor is the series intended to recognize people who have made meaningful contributions in ways other than hybridizing, such as adding substantially to the broad base of knowledge about begonias or about growing, propagating or nurturing begonias, or trekking into the wild to find, identify and preserve begonias for generations to come.

Actually, this series is designed to acknowledge people who have contributed, in general, to the begonia family in some profound way and, consequently, to people far and wide who love begonias. We want to acknowledge them by capturing and sharing an insider's glimpse at the person beyond the name; beyond any legend's

status they may have rightly earned, to see the real person, not just the legendary name.

## A Peek Behind the Curtain

In essence, these profiles are a capsulized peek behind the curtain, if you will, at how these people came to make the contributions they made, seasoned with some little known facts about them and even a few surprises which turn up with our peek behind the curtain.

Kit Jeans Mounger certainly belongs in this group, even though she would protest to the contrary.

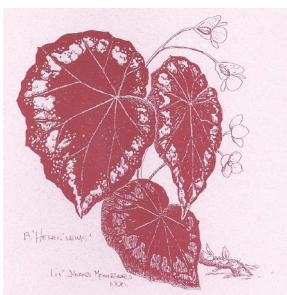
"The title of *Begonia's Legends* is a little too lofty for me. I don't see myself in that league, with the likes of Mike Kartuz, Mabel Corwin or Irene Nuss," Kit recently said. "As far as begonia royalty is concerned, I'm more of a begonia court jester. I just wasn't really that serious about hybridizing."

"I wasn't trying to impress anyone, or create the next world-renown begonia, or advance the science of horticulture, or do anything that serious. For me, hybridizing was a fun exercise — a bit like Christmas morning... I always enjoyed seeing what surprises I'd find when the new plant unwrapped itself."

Kit's father was career Army Air Corps, and she was an army brat. In fact, her

father flew his B-17 into Hickam Field, which was attached to navy base Pearl Harbor, with a full squadron of Flying Fortresses on the morning of December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941. Kit, herself, married into the Air Force in 1953, and lived as an Air Force wife.

Kit began growing begonias in the early 1960s, long before she ever ventured into hybridizing. Her husband had been sent to Viet Nam, and she needed something to occupy her time and attention. One day, she simply picked up a begonia at



Illustrations by Kit Jeans Mounger - *B. listada* (opposite page, top); *B. 'Helen Lewis'* (opposite page, bottom).

Closeup of the dainty eyelash-type leaves of *B. 'Rhinestone Jeans'* (top). This attractive, white blossomed, winter-blooming miniature is one of the begonias hybridized by Kit Jeans Mounger (*B. bowerae* x *B. bowerae* var. *nigramarga*). Plant is in a 2½" pot. Photos by Linda Tamblyn

the supermarket, *B. 'Joe Hayden'*, without really knowing what it was. But, she knew it would make a nice companion for the Beefsteak begonia she had already been growing.

Eventually, she did come to realize what she was growing, and she joined the ABS. That led to her ordering some plants from Maxine Wilson, as a result of an ad she saw in



*The Begonian*. Maxine's greenhouse in Ozark, MO, was only 65 miles away from where Kit was living in Carthage, MO, and eventually Maxine invited Kit to drive over for a visit.

"That visit to Maxine's nursery was like dying and going to begonia heaven. I'd never seen so many different, amazing begonias in my life. I was just electrified."

### Fate & That Serendipity Thing

When Kit's first husband died in 1976, she moved back to Tennessee. With time on her hands, she opened a small mail order plant nursery.

"There weren't enough people locally to support the nursery, and the only way I could compete in the mail order business was by creating new begonias which no one else had. That's why I first began hybridizing."

When asked how many begonias she created over the years, Kit said she guessed it was at least a hundred. She only registered a few, and really didn't keep many records.

As for some of her most recognized hybrids, Kit cited 'Cowardly Lion', 'Pink Minx', 'Nancy Cummins', 'Rhinstone Jeans', 'Long-horn Jeans' and 'Blue Jeans'.

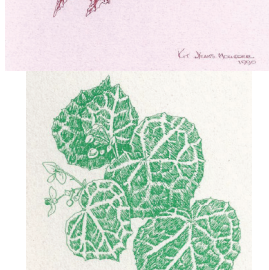
Speaking of 'Cowardly Lion', Kit has often told the story about how, after hybridizing that plant (*bokit X carrieae*), it sat around in her greenhouse for about two years, with not much more than a few scraggly leaves. She resisted throwing it out more than a few times. Eventually, it began — to coin a phrase — to blossom. Kit discarding 'Cowardly Lion' would have been as tragic as, say, Herbert Hoover replacing Burt Lahr in *The Wizard of Oz*.

### Five Books About Cats Later

Begonias represent one form of expression for Kit, but there are more than a few others, as well. Her mother described Kit as being able to draw as soon as she was old enough to hold a pencil. She put that artistic talent to work illustrating begonias, as you can see.

In 1987, Kit was living in Sarasota, FL, working as the curator of the Begonia Collection at Selby Gardens. While there, she started creating stained glass artwork and found a muse producing wild-

A sampling of Kit Jeans Mounger's artistic talents. On the left, from top to bottom: *B. maculata*; *B. 'Pizazz'*; *B. xanthina*; *B. 'Nancy Cummins'*; *B. rajah*



life scenes in glass. Four years later, she moved back to Tennessee, but continued to work in stained glass.

Once, while traveling to a Waterfowl Arts Festival in Salisbury, MD, after being juried into the show, Kit stopped to visit a old friend in Potomac, MD, only to be greeted



Kit Jeans Mounger

by a very distinctive and engaging Maine Coon cat, a breed which is also known as an American Longhair cat. Kit ended up taking that cat back with her to Tennessee, at her friend's request, and that simple event opened two new careers for Kit.

She first began writing as a teenager. Along the way of her life, for 16 years Kit wrote a weekly newspaper column, *Motherhood And Apple Pie*, which provided a foundation but it was that Maine Coon cat she brought back to Tennessee which provided the inspiration for... Kit building a 'Cattery' on her farm at home and becoming a professional breeder of, what else, Maine Coon cats.

Her experiences with her own cats found

their way into five books, beginning in 2008 — "*The Merry Maines: A Shaggy Cat Story*" — written under her *nom de plume*, Garnet Quinn. The books are available through Amazon.com. She finished the fifth in the *Merry Maines* series last year, and the sixth and newest book in the series is due for release around the first of the year.

"You know, I'm very flattered to be included in this 'Begonia's Legends' series, in spite of my hesitation at embracing the term," Kit said. "In case you can't tell, I don't take myself too seriously. But, it's nice to know that I haven't disappeared into the woodwork."

Disappear, indeed. Kit still has some unnamed begonia hybrids she's holding even now as trump cards. But, don't tell anyone!

**Lee Sinoff** ([professional\\_resources@att.net](mailto:professional_resources@att.net); [strategic-branding@att.net](mailto:strategic-branding@att.net)) is a Past President of the Miami Begonia Society, and Marketing & Communications, Operations, Sourcing and Project Management generalist and consultant, operating out of Miami, FL.

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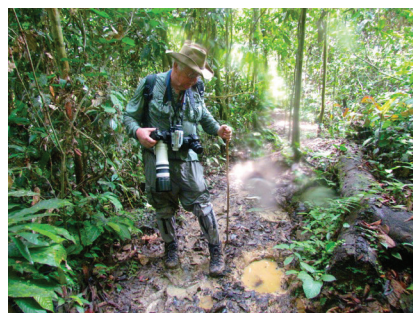


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## Some Thoughts About My Recent Trip to Borneo

Larry Farley, Yorba Linda, California

My desire to visit Borneo began after watching the Africa and Borneo travels of Olsa and Martin Johnson on our b&w TV during the 50's. Tropical plants are my personal favorites and I yearned to see animals living in the wild that were a part of their adventures. Booked our travel to Borneo in June 2012 with a departure date of May 2013. After a 30-hour flight from LAX with stops in Japan and Singapore we arrived in Kuching Borneo. We knew in advance it would be hot and humid but never really experienced that much humidity at any of our prior travels. I now know what it means to be "wringing wet". This was our first experience with leeches too. Remember the movie "The African Queen"?

Although this adventure was almost three weeks duration, it was only during our short visits to Gunung Mulu National Park and Danum Valley that begonias were observed in habitat. Once our local

A leech in action on my wrist (top). We came prepared with long sleeve shirts and long pants plus utilized the recommended "Leech Socks". Even with this protection, they managed to move up our arms under our sleeves or between the buttons of our shirts. You really could not feel them but once seen they were easily removed by a few drops of Purell. The problem that happens next after they drop off is that due to their anticoagulants you tend to bleed for a while as can be seen on my wife's shirt (second picture down) after we removed two leeches from her abdomen.

On a trail in Danum Valley (third picture down) I am standing adjacent to a good sized puddle that was a footprint from the Pygmy Elephants that are evident on the trails. We managed to catch only a fleeting glance of one (fourth picture) that was noisily eating in the forest. This picture reminded me that the humidity played havoc on my cameras. I spent hours with a hair dryer attempting to rid my cameras and lens of all the moisture even though we were taking precautions to avoid this problem.

Another one of the unidentified begonias (?) we saw on our journey (bottom picture).

guide saw my excitement upon seeing my first wild begonia, he made an extra effort to visit areas abounding with various begonia species. Unfortunately he did not know any of the species names. If anyone still has room on their "Bucket Lists", I strongly urge you to add Borneo.



Larry asked if anyone could identify the begonias, like the one above, that he saw in Borneo. John Boggan, *United States National Herbarium, National Museum of Natural History; Smithsonian Institution*, said, "I don't think anybody has worked with the begonia flora of Borneo recently and there are a great many species, many of them very poorly known (and probably dozens more still undescribed). Details of the flowers, ovaries and fruits are often critical for identification. I would also note that Borneo is a very big island, and many tropical begonia species have very narrow distributions. Without knowing precisely where these were photographed it may be impossible to put even a tentative identification on them."

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## Calling All Indoor Growers!

Growing begonias indoors, in cold climates, takes some special considerations. Amy Shonka, Topeka, KS, maintains this beautiful collection, which blooms profusely even in the dead of winter. Do you grow indoors? Send your indoors growings tips, challenges, and pictures to *The Begonian* - we'd love to hear how you grow your begonias! Photo by Amy Shonka



## Best in Show

Wanda Macnair and her *B. sizemoreae* which won Best in Show, the Bessie Raymond Buxton Memorial Award for best contained atmosphere, and the Orpha C. Fox Award at the recent Buxton Branch Show and Sale. Photo by Tony Pinto

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# The Begonian March/April 2014

## Deadline: January 28

Send your photos, growing tips,  
or articles to:  
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